



**PROGRAM  
OF  
VIETNAM VETERANS  
AGAINST THE WAR**

**25¢**







Use once and throw away. That's the reality facing veterans today. While we were in the military we were used to prop up American business interests in countries all over the world, to fight a rich man's war. Once we got out, we found they didn't need us anymore; we were discarded vets with lots of promises about how good we were going to be treated. When we tried to get the rich and their cronies in the government to pay off on their promises, we found the promises were lies. When we go to the VA we find harassment, red tape, and inadequate benefits (once we finally get them). We were promised that we could go to school on the GI Bill, but we find we can't both get an education and still live decently on what the Bill pays. They told us that VA hospitals would take care of our medical needs, but we find long lines, staff cutbacks, and overall miserable medical treatment. On top of all this, it's almost impossible to find a job; when we do, we're soon faced with layoffs.

Veterans around the country face these and more problems everyday. The gap between what we were promised and what we can get grows wider and wider. But vets aren't just sitting back quietly. We're getting together, we're organizing, and we're fighting to get what is ours--our rights.

As veterans we have a lot in common. Many of us were drafted into the military. Others enlisted because we thought we were keeping the world "safe for democracy," or "insuring freedom" by fighting in Vietnam. We believed the recruiters' promises about good job training and benefits that would be waiting for us when we got out. Many of us were sent to Vietnam; there we saw that the war was not being fought for democracy or freedom, and that it was not in our interests at all. We were nothing more than cannon fodder for the rich. A tour of duty in Vietnam made this really clear: often we were forced to kill unarmed civilians, burn villages, go out on search-and-destroy missions to harass, kill or intimidate the Vietnamese people. The big brass and their bosses back home tried to turn Vietnam into one big free-fire zone where we were supposed to shoot at anything that moved, and any dead Vietnamese was automatically listed as "the enemy" in the inflated body count.

Many of us learned that all of this was just a part of that war; in the process we saw our buddies killed or wounded. At the same time we could see that the ARVN soldiers weren't much interested in fighting, and for good reason. They were in a better position than we were to see that the Saigon government was rotten to the core, and that the great majority of the Vietnamese people were suffering because of it. While we watched the ARVN troops shying away from battle, we were impressed by the determination of the "enemy" who fought with such a sense of purpose against overwhelming military technology.

All of us, whether we fought in Vietnam or not, or if we were veterans of earlier wars, experienced all the hassles of the US military. Many of us who did not end up in

Vietnam were sent overseas to Korea or Germany and saw first hand how the US military is used to try to maintain control over other countries.

Out of our war experiences, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) grew. Vets joined the organization because it was out front, letting everyone possible know that we were against the war in Indochina and fighting like hell to bring that war to an end. At the same time, the organization has always had a sense of the identity which draws vets together--the common experience of what it's like to be in the military.

We veterans have gotten a double-shaft--shafted in the military and shafted again once we're out. And we aren't about to take it. VVAW is building a fighting veterans organization which fights for the needs of vets and which continues to fight against rich man's wars like the war in Indochina.

The government we live under is run in the interests of big business and the rich. Their monopolies have to make more and more profits in order to survive. So the fat cats who run the system try to get more out of their workers through speed-ups and layoffs; and they try to save money by cutting back on unprofitable "services" such as welfare, food stamps, and vets benefits. At the same time they look for markets abroad to try to find cheaper labor, to sell their products and to rip off raw resources. If they can't do these things, their economic system goes into crisis. It's a law--"expand or die"--which forces the rulers into war to protect their international investments, particularly when they come into conflict with their counterparts in other countries, especially the Soviet Union, who are trying to grab the same markets. The rulers of the superpowers are in fierce competition with each other to exploit the greatest number of people and gobble up the greatest profits. But both superpowers are faced not just by each other, but also with people like the Indochinese who fight for their own freedom and independence.

That's where we veterans come in. The rich needed us badly as the cannon fodder to fight their war and protect their profits. And they told us all kinds of lies in order to use us. Now, after they and their puppet governments like that in South Vietnam have been beaten in the war, they don't need us anymore. They can't make a profit by giving us jobs, so we go unemployed. Because there aren't profits to be made from vets benefits, they cut back; the same lack of profits lies behind worsening healthcare at VA hospitals, late checks, and a poor GI Bill. But we didn't cause their economic crisis. We damn well won't pay for it. In the past there's been only one way that the people have gotten anything out of the rich man's system: by fighting for it, just like workers did to win unemployment insurance or the eight-hour day. And then people have had to fight to keep what they've won.

This program is a battle plan for veterans. It's how we're going to fight, why we're fighting, and who we're fighting against. All vets have a stake in this struggle because all of us were used and then tossed aside. We're going to fight back, whether at the VA, on the campus, the unemployment office or on the job--everyplace we're being shafted. We want every veteran, from whatever war, and others who want to fight for the rights of veterans, to join in this fight.

## ***JOBS OR INCOME NOW***

Millions of Americans are out of work simply because it's unprofitable for the rich to employ them. That's what makes unemployment offices crammed with people, not that people don't want to work. Vets like other people want jobs. Not only do we have to work to live, but we take pride in the work we do, just like other working people. All the wealth in the country comes from those who work; workers have made everything from automobiles to the clothes we wear. We say, a decent job at decent wages is a right of all people.

As a part of the work force, veterans are particularly hard hit by unemployment. Younger vets (20-24) have a 20.5% rate of unemployment (US government figures for Fall, 1975) and Black vets have an even higher rate (32.8%). There's no way to tell how many vets are forced to go to school so they can survive (just barely) on the GI Bill because they can't find jobs, and they aren't even part of the government figures. Neither are the vets in prison, often because they can't get work either. Vets just out of the military are trained for nothing--there just aren't jobs open for grunts or doorgunners. Even those of us who were specialists in the service find that civilian jobs often require a different kind of training. And because of the years spent in the military, we have lost time in the job mar-





**VVAW MARCHING FOR JOBS OR INCOME NOW**

ket. As a result vets are often among the first laid off when the crunch comes down.

Over 600,000 vets have less-than-honorable discharges from the service; often these are vets who resisted the war or fought against repression in the military. Most employers want to know about a new employee's discharge, and a bad discharge means no job or, at best, a bad one. The discrimination against these vets must stop. We need a single-type discharge for all veterans, made retroactive. Under the present system in the US, a single-type discharge won't insure a job, but it will make the present discrimination by employers much more difficult.

Because of the potential explosiveness of high unemployment among vets, the various governments (federal, state and local) have come up with "Jobs for Vets" programs, set up under the cover of being a reward for vets. In fact, these programs are shams. They put us on temporary status (and fire us before we can get any job security), pay miserably low wages, keep us out of unions, and make sure we don't get unemployment benefits, medical care benefits or other benefits that workers have fought for and won over the years. The "sub" program in the postoffice is one example. The bosses are trying to use veterans to keep from being forced to pay union wages and hire permanent employees, plus trying to weaken the unions in their shops.

We aren't interested in these "divide and conquer" schemes; we are part of the over-all workforce and won't be divided from other workers in the fight for jobs. We have seen, however, that this system can't provide enough jobs to go around. Even the high-paid bureaucrats in Washington have said that 5% unemployment is "normal"; we say that "normal" unemployment is not acceptable. If the system can't provide us with jobs, then we demand a liveable income. But they try to make it as hard as possible for us to collect unemployment compensation which we need in order to feed ourselves and our families.

At unemployment offices a barricade of red tape is used to try to intimidate and confuse people. The bosses make it so difficult it's as if the money comes out of their own pockets; in fact the money comes from the workers in the first place. Working people fought for and won unemployment compensation; no bureaucracy is going to take it away.

**JOBS OR INCOME NOW!**  
**UNION JOBS AT UNION WAGES!**  
**WE WON'T SCAB ON OTHER WORKERS!**  
**A SINGLE-TYPE DISCHARGE FOR ALL VETS!**

# **WE DECLARE** **WAR ON THE V.A.**



**VETERANS' DAY '75 NEW YORK CITY**

With no jobs we still have to survive; more and more vets are forced to turn to the VA in order to collect what is ours. It's a familiar story to many vets: we get laid off and so lose our medical insurance. Who can afford \$150 per day for hospitalization, or the soaring tuition costs at school? The VA is the only place left. We know that vets benefits are not gifts from the rich; vets fought for them--they are our rights. But all the promises and advertisements about the VA are lies; instead of serving our interests, the VA tries to discourage vets from getting their benefits. One VA bureaucrat came right out and said it: "We're not veteran advocates." Who the hell are they working for?

Any vet who has confronted the VA knows what some of the problems are. Many of us have tried to work through the "system" and use the VA bureaucracy; we've been shuffled from one office to another, told to fill in form after form, or that we didn't have the right information, and on and on and on. Once the forms are finally filled out according to regulations, then we begin to wait for the checks, whether for school, disability or VA loans. One vet didn't get his VA school check for months, so he was forced to take a school loan to survive; when that payment ran out, he took a part-time job, but the school snatched his salary checks to pay back the loan. Meanwhile, the VA school check still did not come. We simply can't afford late checks--we need them to live on. And we won't accept the answer that "It's the computer's fault." The computer does not run the VA.

All this harassment and red tape are nothing new to vets. We saw it all before when we were in the military. The VA spends \$15 billion a year (fiscal 1976 budget); it shouldn't be so difficult to provide for the needs of vets. But for every check they can postpone a couple of months, the government can draw a little more interest and keep their precious VA budget a little more in balance. The VA isn't a profit-making venture, so the ruling class in this country will try to scrimp and cut corners wherever they think they can get away with it. And to hell with vets. It's no wonder that millions of veterans avoid the hassle by not even trying to collect their benefits--that's just what the government wants. We have to fight to end all this harassment and red tape.

**IMMEDIATE PROCESSING OF CLAIMS!**  
**NO MORE LATE CHECKS!**  
**END RED TAPE!**

The VA hospital system is the largest in the country; overall, conditions are the worst. Vets who have hospital insurance don't even come near the VA because conditions are so bad. And this is true despite hundreds of thousands of dedicated VA workers, medi-



cal personnel, and volunteers. Like other Americans, vets need decent medical treatment. Disabled veterans, hurt while being used to protect the bosses' profits, are faced with wholly inadequate care from the same class of rich bosses which was all too ready to use their blood in its wars. Vets were promised decent medical care at the VA; instead, we're sent to butchershops.

Once vets get inside a VA hospital, their lives are literally in jeopardy. In Chicago, one vet who was paralyzed and unable to speak was left in his wheelchair in a VA elevator for 27 hours before VA administrators could find him. In Ann Arbor, at least 11 patients died in one blatant example of VA negligence; because the VA did not act when there was a sudden jump in deaths from one particular type of breathing arrest, patients who could have been saved were not. To cover up their negligence, the VA bosses made all kinds of noise about a phantom psychotic murderer. In the Long Beach VA, a number of vets were blinded as a result of a new, unproved drug. Using vets as guinea pigs is not something new. It's been going on for a long time in VA hospitals, in county hospitals filled with welfare patients, and in prisons around the country.

Older veterans have special problems since they often need long-term hospitalization. When they should be treated with the respect they deserve, they are instead treated like merchandise in a warehouse--stored away in the hospital until they die. Many older vets who have to live in VA housing are coerced into miserable, degrading jobs at slave wages (50¢ an hour), meaning that the VA doesn't have to hire regular workers at a decent wage.

One of the reasons for the poor health care in VA hospitals is the constant cutbacks in staff and workers. Even before a recent round of cutbacks, the VA didn't have enough people to do the work. No matter how much a nurse wants to help her patients, there's nothing she can do when she has more patients than she can handle. And the same is true for other VA workers. Now the VA is trying to speed up those workers who remain instead of hiring enough to do the work right. In one VA hospital a single nurse is expected to watch 20 therapeutic baths for patients who are unable to help themselves; not only does that mean the patients don't get decent care, but their lives are in danger. In order to fight for decent medical care, patients and workers must unite to fight criminally rotten conditions in VA hospitals--conditions that are just as rotten for workers as they are for patients. In some places, this is beginning to happen.

**SUPPORT VA WORKERS' FIGHT FOR  
BETTER PAY AND WORKING CONDITIONS!  
NO MORE PATIENTS USED AS GUINEA PIGS!  
DECENT MEDICAL CARE FOR ALL VA PATIENTS!**



**VA HOSPITAL PATIENTS IN DETROIT JOIN DEMONSTRATION TO FIGHT  
FOR DECENT MEDICAL CARE DESPITE VA ATTEMPTS TO LOCK THEM IN.**

VA hospitals and other services are bad for all vets, but certain groups of veterans have additional problems. Minority veterans suffer from the same discrimination at the VA that they faced in the military and in other parts of the system we live under. Black vets, with almost double the unemployment rate of other Vietnam-era vets, face cutbacks in VA programs. In one state, the Veterans Commission began an investigation of alleged "enrollment abuses"; instead of checking all schools, they focused their harassment on schools where the student body was predominantly Black. Some of these schools unjustly lost accreditation, putting Black vets out of school and off the GI Bill.

One third of the prisoners in state and federal prisons are Vietnam-era veterans, and a high percentage of these are minority vets. They all face both the red tape of the VA and the bureaucracy and brutality of the prison system, making it almost impossible to get the benefits which are their rights and which they need. The VA makes no serious effort to reach these vets.

Drugs were carefully pushed by the US government in Southeast Asia, with the CIA bringing heroin into Vietnam; with more and more American troops in Vietnam rebelling against the war and against the military, drugs were used by the war makers to attempt to keep GIs pacified. For years the VA refused to recognize addiction as a service-connected disability just like the military brass tried to hide the whole drug problem. Only an intense struggle by vets forced the VA to begin treatment of addiction. Then, instead of really helping addicted vets, the VA started a methadone program to treat heroin addiction --yet methadone is more addictive than heroin. Vets on these programs can't work; they have to go to the VA for their methadone doses. And, because the VA won't even tell vets what their individual dosage is, vets who want to kick methadone don't have the necessary information to get started. The way the VA deals with this problem is clear from the record of the Brooklyn VA where, over a two-year period, 20 patients died as a result of VA administered overdoses. That's not treatment; that's murder.

Another group of vets who can't get anything at all for their time in the service are those with less-than-honorable discharges. The whole rotten discharge system has been a weapon used by the military to try to threaten GIs into line; GIs who resist get the bad discharges. And that leads to a lifetime of discrimination by the VA and by employers. Though some grades of discharges mean that the regional VA has the authority by law to grant treatment or benefits, standard policy dictates that the vet is not told about this authority. All these attacks on veterans must stop.

**WE DEMAND AN END TO DISCRIMINATION AT THE VA**

**FULL BENEFITS FOR VETS  
REGARDLESS OF DISCHARGE !  
FULL VA BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS IN PRISON !**

Reducing disability payments is one of the worst ways the VA is cutting back on services. Millions of veterans were wounded in World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam; many others have service-connected disabilities, and often payment from the VA is a large part or all of their income. Disability payments are determined by preset calculations with no reference to individual circumstances. As a result a vet can get 10% disability payment (\$36 per month) from the VA even though he is 100% disabled on the job market. In 1973 an attempt to cut all disability payments was defeated through the massive protests of veterans; now, by cutting disability payments one by one, the VA is trying to accomplish the same reduction without changing the law and without arousing the anger of a large number of veterans. It won't work--we'll see to that!

VA disability hearings are often held in secret, even from the vet whose case is being discussed unless we fight for open hearings. But that's only one of the VA's attempts to keep what they are doing hidden from the people. Patients are not told what medication they are getting, or what kind of surgical techniques might be tried out on them. In the Detroit VA hospital the regulations forbid a nurse or aide to tell the patient what his own blood pressure is! Every place the vet turns, he runs up against another regulation.

We say medical records must be open to patients; disability hearings must be open to the vet involved and to any supporters or friends or witnesses the vets wants to bring a-





long. We've had enough of this inner-sanctum secrecy. The VA is scared silly of people seeing what they're up to. In addition, since the VA will try to use all their "experts" to deny a vet's realistic disability payments, we say that the VA should pay for vets to bring in evidence from our own doctors. These payments for disability are not just "gifts"--they are vital for disabled vets. There's no way we can allow them to be cut.

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**Picket line around the case of a Milwaukee vet whose disability rating was cut. Militant actions of vets forced the VA to hold open hearings and raise the vet's disability payments.**




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## **WE DEMAND LIVEABLE DISABILITY PAYMENTS ! WE DEMAND OPEN HEARINGS ! NO DISABILITY CUTBACKS !**

Promises about job training and educational benefits have long been one of the biggest advertising gimmicks for military recruiters. When we can't find jobs, we have to get training or an education to try to improve our living conditions; that's when we go to the VA to get the GI Bill. But today's GI Bill makes it almost impossible for poor or working class vets to go to school fulltime without an outside job, something the friendly recruiter didn't bother to tell us. School payments are well below federal poverty levels. Vets fought for decent benefits and won the GI Bill immediately following World War II. The 1945 GI Bill at least paid tuition, book, other educational expenses and a living allowance.

Now, in an attempt to cut back on services in still another area, the VA is going through all kinds of changes around the GI Bill. The government and its media is wailing about "abuses" by vets. Well, we know who was "abused" and it isn't the rich and their system; it's vets who were sent off to a war for their profits, and vets who have to scrape by on GI Bill crumbs. Now the VA is starting to check class attendance, as if vets were still in the military. One pilot program will deny benefits to vets in classes which are too large (which means classes in almost any state or city school) or classes taught by teaching assistants. It's like the disability payments: they can't come right out and try to cut the GI Bill because they know vets will fight. But they hope if they can get rid of a few student vets at a time, no one will notice and they'll be able to cut their costs.

GI Bill payments are full of petty restrictions and regulations. The Bill has to be used, for instance, within ten years of discharge, but vets earned the right to go to school at government expense anytime they need to do so. There are restrictions on the kinds of

courses, on part-time study, and any other area where they can harass vets. It all seems based on the convenience of the VA rather than what serves the needs of veterans. Along with all this is the latest attack on the GI Bill: the proposal to end the Bill entirely for future veterans.

**WE DEMAND GI BILL PAYMENT OF ALL SCHOOL EXPENSES PLUS A DECENT LIVING ALLOWANCE !**

**WE DEMAND AN END TO GI BILL RESTRICTIONS !**

**NO CUTOFF IN THE GI BILL!**

# **WE WON'T FIGHT ANY RICH MAN'S WAR**

All people are affected by the danger of another war, whether it's a war like Vietnam or a world war between the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union. Despite all the talk about "detente" the rulers of these superpowers are in constant conflict to see who can gobble up the greater share of the world and increase their sphere of influence. The ruling classes of both powers maintain large standing armies in countries outside their borders and have used them to invade other countries--the US in Indochina and the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia. The arms race escalates at a breathtaking pace; the US puts its troops and weapons (including nuclear weapons) in Western Europe to protect its interests, while the Soviet Union does the same thing in Eastern Europe, turning Europe into an armed camp. Both governments are deeply involved in supplying arms (at a profit) to other countries such as Angola. Both are economically and politically trying to win control of various parts of the world. Their rivalry in the Middle East is particularly significant, since whichever superpower controls that area controls Europe--rich resources of the Middle East are the lifeline for European business.



**FOR AMERICAN GIs, IT WAS EASY TO SEE WHOSE INTERESTS (such as the Saigon Shell station pictured above) WE WERE IN**

**VIETNAM TO PROTECT**

Competing for this control puts the superpowers on a collision course toward world war which will mean massive suffering and bloodshed for the world's people. The rulers of the superpowers don't care about that; their only concern is trying to hold on to what they've got while trying to get more and more in attempts to save their profit systems. Because we all have experience with the military, and many of us have the experience of having been used in Indochina, we must use that experience to attack and expose wars of aggression and to help mobilize people against them.

The war in Indochina sure wasn't to our benefit. Neither will be another world war. What the Indochina war did was make piles of profits for the rich and their class, those who were trying so desperately to maintain control in that area of the world. But the Indochinese people waged a long and fierce fight for their freedom; in spite of tremendous armaments and military technology of the US, they won their war of independence. In the



process, the Indochinese won the support of people all over the world, including millions of vets and other Americans who could see that the fight in Indochina was a battle to get rid of US interference and US puppet governments in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

During the 1960's and 70's, millions of people resisted the war in one form or another. Millions marched in the streets and many were arrested. Many men refused to be inducted into the military. Many deserted from the military to protest the war. Many GIs got less-than-honorable discharges for their resistance to the repression and racism in the military and to the war. These people were right to resist. They need a total amnesty for that resistance. The real war criminals, like Nixon, are free; yet spokesmen for the capitalists still dare to call war resisters "criminals."

Resistance to the Indochina war was huge; vets say that we won't fight another rich man's war, and we're spreading the word about whose interests wars like that are fought in. So who is going to fight the next war needed by the class which rules the country in order to expand their profits? One answer is in the VA and unemployment offices in the person of the "friendly, smiling" recruiter: "Can't find a job, son? Well, we have one ready for you." Or, "So you're a vet and the going's tough--remember how good it was back in the Army? And we'll throw in a bonus besides."

A long fight by millions of people brought the draft to an end (though the apparatus for the draft still exists, 18-year-olds are still registered, and the government could crank up the system again if they needed to) and the Pentagon brass can proudly point to the "all-volunteer military." But there's not any volunteering involved when you can't get a job, still have to eat, and are taken in by the grinning promises of the recruiter: that's just the draft under another name. We won't stand by to see these military recruiters leeching off the problems of the veteran or the unemployed.



**PROTESTING THE WAR WE FOUGHT IN, THOUSANDS OF VETS THREW AWAY MEDALS AT THE U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING, VOWING "IF WE HAVE TO FIGHT AGAIN IT WILL BE TO TAKE THESE STEPS."**

We know what's in store for today's recruits. Hundreds of thousands of US troops are stationed around the world. The US military props up dictators like Pak Chung Hi in South Korea, Marcos in the Philippines, and the Shah of Iran. These forces protect US corporate and monopoly interests. They also provide opportunities, like the so-called "attack" on the US ship in the Gulf of Tonkin at the beginning of the Vietnam war, to try to hoodwink the American people into accepting another rich man's war. Today, in the Sinai, the US is sending in "technicians" to "keep the peace." But we saw the "advisors" in Vietnam turn into 550,000 US troops. In the Sinai, the "technicians" provide further opportunities for the US to escalate its involvement in that vital area. And who knows what forces will be sent under what cover-up title to fight in Angola or elsewhere--for exactly the same reason.

We got a bellyfull of the war in Vietnam, learned a lot from it, and don't like the taste it left in our mouths when we came home. We'll tell that to recruits, potential recruits, and all the rest of the American people. If the richpunks

who run this country want another war somewhere in the world, they'll have to fight it themselves; we won't. We'll fight instead against their war here at home, take up the struggle against US aggression abroad, in the same breath as we fight for our jobs and a decent way of life.

**ALL TROOPS OUT OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES !  
UNIVERSAL, UNCONDITIONAL AMNESTY FOR WAR  
RESISTERS !**

**WE WON'T FIGHT ANOTHER RICH MAN'S WAR !**

# **VETERANS**

## **UNITE TO FIGHT!**



### **1932 - WORLD WAR I VETS REPEL POLICE ATTACK DURING "BONUS MARCH"**

There are a lot of lessons in the history of US working people. For years they've fought against oppression and exploitation. For generations, workers have fought for unemployment insurance, the eight-hour day, and even the right to organize unions. Veterans too have not taken the treatment from the rich lying down. Many vets were part of all these struggles of workers and, in addition, fought for the rights of all vets. Our history is full of victories.

During World War I, US troops in Europe saw first hand the turmoil and uproar sweeping the continent. Then, like now, the "Great Powers" were trying to divide up the world. Miles of barbed wire, muddy trenches, battlefields littered with mangled bodies, lungs destroyed by burning mustard gas were the daily experience of the soldiers. Troops in the trenches on both sides of the battlefield began to ask what are we getting killed for? They compared their miserable conditions with the kings, tzars and princes, dressed in spotless and bemedalled finery, prancing through the rear areas; and with the rich industrialists sitting safely in their plush offices back at home. Soon, troop revolts took place in the military of almost every country. Revolutionary ideas were spreading about making war against the rich, and in Russia the czar's government was overthrown. US troops were also touched by these revolutionary ideas.

The rulers of the US were afraid of what they saw in Europe and afraid of what GIs were learning. People like General Pershing, chief US commander, were instrumental in forming and planning the American Legion which they saw as a way to keep the returning vets under control--their control. In a further attempt to pacify vets, the government was forced to give them a cash bonus. This bonus was supposed to make up the difference between what the military paid and what GIs could have been making as civilians; in fact, the government hoped to drum up patriotism. Actually, the cash payment was deferred until 1945 (vets called it "The Tombstone Bonus"). The bonus was not given to vets because the Vanderbilts and Rockefellers were nice people, but because political ideas among vets were seen as a threat to them.

In 1932, the middle of the great depression, vets went to Washington DC to demand immediate payment of their bonus. This great upsurge of veterans was called the Bonus Army; over 25,000 vets and their families poured into Washington from all over the country. They demonstrated and marched; they fought with the police who tried to disperse them. The government used every tactic it could think of to refuse the bonus to the vets while, at the same time, the government was giving huge loans to business interests. The



media called vets "treasury robbers" for demanding what they had been promised. Finally, the government took the last step and called out its military arm; under General MacArthur and his underlings Eisenhower and Patton, special troops were ordered to attack the vets and force them from the city. (Earlier, GIs had refused orders to attack the marchers, so the government had to import special units.) Vets fought tooth and nail, but were driven out of Washington.

The vets had come to the Capital with faith in the government, believing that Congress and the President would sympathize with them and give them the much-needed cash. They were met with deception, harassment, and finally bayonets, cavalry, and tanks. To the Bonus marchers, and millions of other Americans, it was clear that the military was being used to protect a government which would give millions to business but not a cent to starving veterans. But even after they were driven from the city, vets continued to struggle for payment, and several years later, finally got it.

At the end of World War II, unrest among GIs brought about another confrontation. The "Back Home Movement" began when GIs demanded to be sent home rather than left as occupation forces in the Pacific or to be used against the people of China. The rich, remembering clearly the militance of vets that had swept the nation in the 30's, quickly brought them home and passed the GI Bill to try to pacify the anger of this new generation of veterans.

Following in these militant footsteps, Vietnam veterans showed their anger at the continuing Indochina war as thousands of vets united with VVAW in opposing and exposing the criminal nature of that war. In April 1971 over 1200 vets threw away their war medals, flinging them in disgust on the US Capitol steps, and sparking a nationwide escalation of anti-war protest among the American people. Like vets before us, we went to Washington to lobby Congress, but quickly learned that Congress represented the same rich interests which had sent us off to Vietnam. Throughout the years, VVAW again and again demonstrated against the war--seizing the Statue of Liberty, closing down the Lincoln Memorial, bringing out thousands of people to demonstrate against the Nixon inauguration, and over 3500 to the climax of a four-day demonstration on July 4th, 1974. We didn't rely any longer on Congress or the President to end the war in Indochina. We learned we had to rely on the determination and strength of the liberation forces in Indochina, the unity and strength among ourselves, and the fighting spirit of the American people.

Today, with the economic crisis all around us, it's even more important that veterans unite to fight against that class of filthy rich parasites who live by exploitation and plunder. VVAW chapters across the nation have taken up the fight of veterans. Vets in the 1970's have been vocal and militant in fighting back. Hundreds demonstrated in New York City against sham job programs; hundreds marched in Washington DC in April 1975 along with other workers demanding jobs. Vets are fighting for a decent GI Bill on campuses from New York to California. Demonstrations and picket lines happen constantly at VA hospitals and offices nationwide, winning victories and uniting with other vets getting screwed by the rich and their stinking system. Veterans are on the move.

We don't put our faith in the government or the bloated business tycoons who pull its strings. They're the ones who wanted us real bad when they needed blood to shed for their profits, and who throw us away when we don't swell their profits further. Instead, we put our faith in the millions of veterans who have shared with us the experience of being used and thrown away. We learn from the vets who have gone before us in fighting for their needs and their rights. We learn from working people's determination to fight. When one vet fights alone, he can get lost. When a hundred, a thousand vets fight together we're able to fight long and hard to win our demands.



**1974 - VVAW MARCHED & DEMONSTRATED IN WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITING VETS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

# **Membership & Structure**

VVAW welcomes all people who want to join in the fight to build a fighting veterans' movement. Although the majority of our members are vets of the Vietnam-era, we encourage veterans of earlier wars and non-vets who want to build the vets' struggle. Membership requirements are active participation in the life of the organization, and payment of \$1 per month to the national organization.

VVAW is a democratic organization; major organizational decisions are made, as far as possible, only after discussion among members in local chapters. Chapter members decide on local projects or programs under the general guidelines laid out in this national program. Members also elect regional leadership and representatives to the National Interim Committee and to National Steering Committee meetings. At meetings of these groups, with representatives from around the country, major organizational decisions are made; these groups also elect national coordinators who work in the National Office in Chicago, provide day-to-day leadership, and publish the national newspaper, The Veteran.

## **INSIGNIA**

US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV)  
(Official Design by the Institute of Heraldry, US Army)



Yellow and red are the Vietnam colors. The red ground alludes to the infiltration and aggression from beyond the embattled "wall" (ie. the Great Wall of China). The opening in the "Wall" through which this infiltration and aggression flow is blocked by the sword representing US military aid and support. The "wall" is arched and the sword pointed upward in reference to the offensive action pushing the aggressors back.

It was first issued to the 12,000 "advisors" in Vietnam in March of 1963.

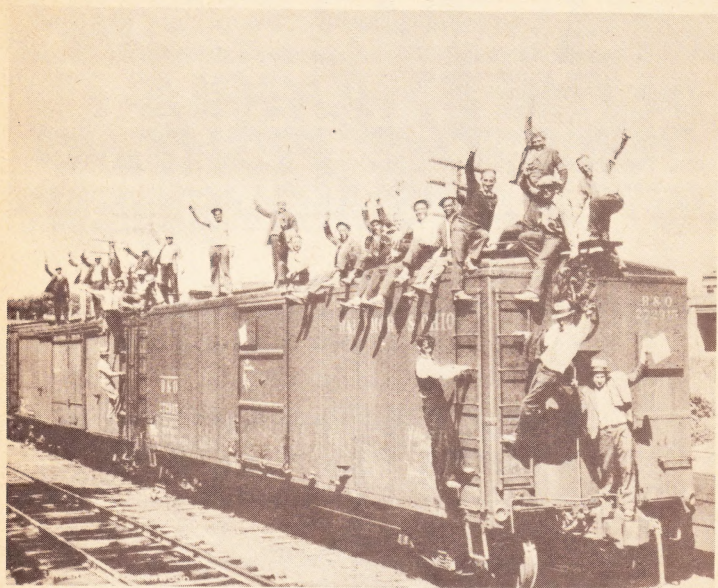
### **Insignia of Vietnam Veterans Against the War**

VVAW took the MACV patch as its own, replacing the sword with the international symbol of soldiers killed in action. This was done to help expose the purposes of the US aggression in Vietnam. As with all propaganda put out by the US ruling class to justify American intervention in Indochina, the MACV insignia also put forward lies. The US military was not protecting the Vietnamese from infiltration from the People's Republic of China, but was instead trying to "save" Vietnam for the rich corporations in the US.



Our insignia has come to represent an organization that is building a fighting veterans movement aimed at exposing and attacking rich man's wars, like the Indochina war, while at the same time fighting for a decent way of life for veterans of all US wars and military services.





War veterans arriving in Washington for the bonus protest. Sympathetic train crews helped them along the way, sometimes billing the ex-soldiers as "livestock."

# SUBSCRIBE TO



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MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO VVAW, PO BOX 20184, Chicago, IL 60620

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT VVAW CONTACT:

**VVAW National Office**  
**P.O. Box 20184**  
**Chicago, ILL. 60620**  
**or call**  
**(312) 651-1583**

**LOCAL**